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THE ADVENTURES OF
AMERICAN DOUGHBOY
BY WILLIAM BROWN

Arranged by Elizabeth Little

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William Brown

Co. F, 9th Infantry, 2nd Division

A. E. F.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN AMERICAN DOUGHBOY

By WILLIAM BROWN
Co. F, 9th Infantry, 2nd Division, A. E. F.

Compiled and arranged
from his notes
By BIRDEENA TUTTLE



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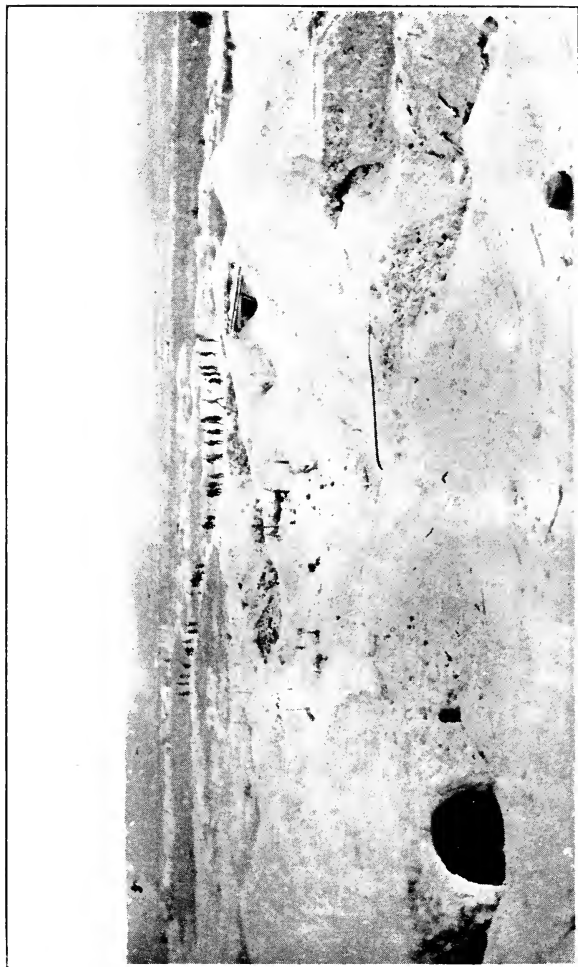
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TACOMA, WASH.

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SHELL SHOT GROUND, ST. MIHIEL SECTOR

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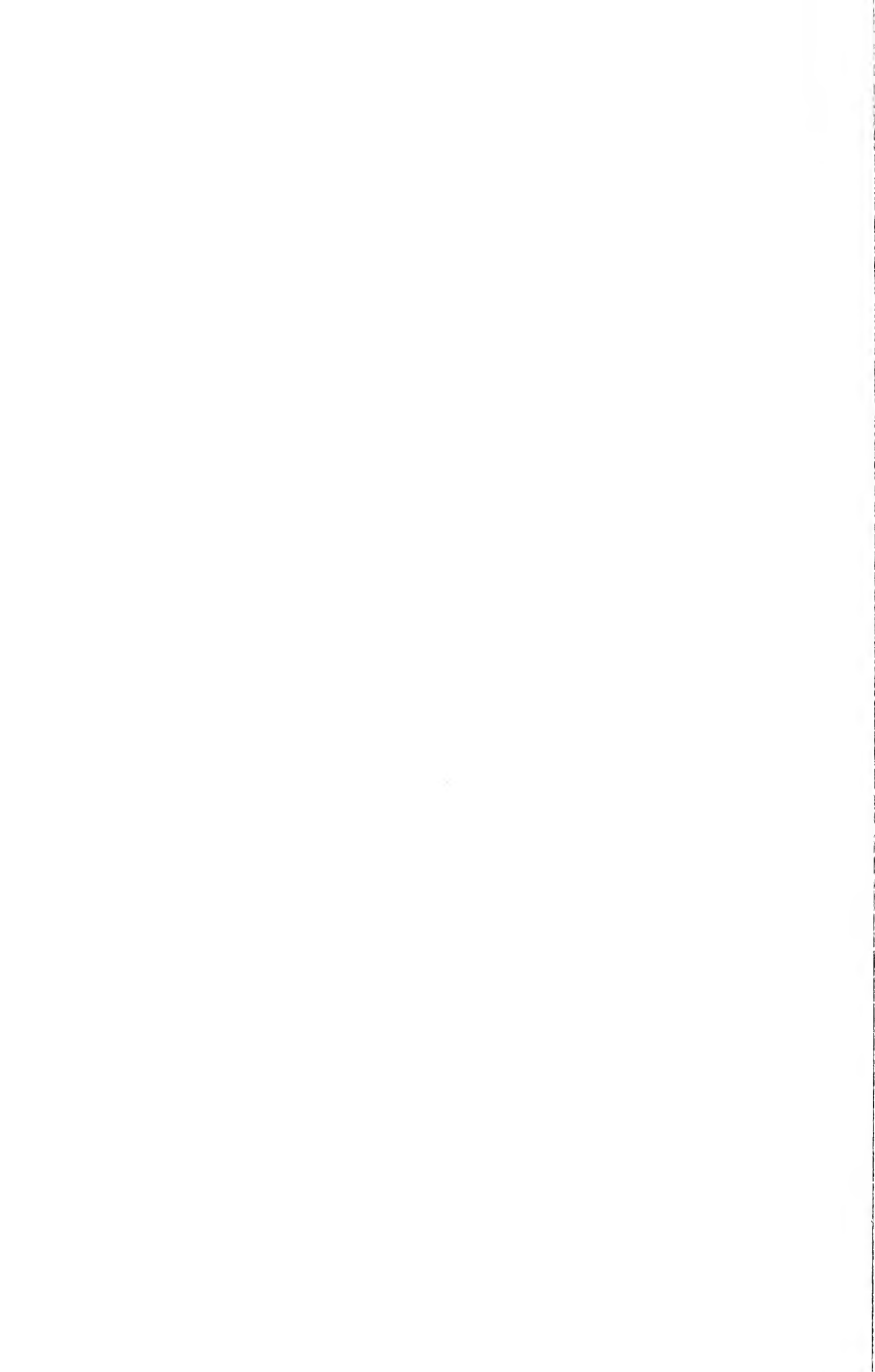
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The Adventures of an American Doughboy.

CHAPTER I.

IN THE U. S. A.

Writing a book was the least of my intentions, good or bad, but so many people whom I have met since my return from "Over There" have been so interested in the late war and what the Americans did in it, that I have written this book—so that anyone who is interested in the adventures of a doughboy, who went through all the battles that the Americans were in, with the exception of the Argonne-Meuse offensive, may re-live them with him. Everything I have written is authentic.

And now to the story. Most of my life has been spent near Puget Sound, principally in Seattle. In March, 117, I heard of some good homestead lands in Montana and went there to investigate them, hoping to find one that suited me. Nothing suited me—I was restless and the newspapers only made it worse. The terrible atrocities that the Germans committed, their frightful cruelty to non-combatants, women and children, their ruthless destruction of hospital ships made my fighting Irish blood boil. I thought of war all day and dreamt of it at night and felt that America surely must get into it, but I couldn't wait so I enlisted at Valier, Mon-

tana, in Co. D of the 2nd Montana National Guard, on March 31st, 1917. Co. D's home was at the Armory in Valier, so we stayed there. three weeks and drilled, though we had no uniforms.

Then we were ordered to Helena, to old Fort Harrison, and outfitted there. Fort Harrison is a relic of old Indian days and the buildings are in disreputable condition. General Pershing was a colonel there at one time.

I had great fun getting into my uniform, and after I'd donned it and laced my leggings—some different from these wrapped ones—my feet felt so light—it sure was a case of high stepping. We had the old round blanket rolls over our shoulders, too, instead of the flat back packs of to-day and we had a great time when we tried to “port arms” and fall into step cadence. It just wouldn't work, the old roll was in the way.

After outfitting, without any further training, different companies were sent throughout the State to do guard duty, for Montana was having a great deal of trouble then with the I. W. W.s and pro-Germans. Company D was sent to Great Falls, then subdivided into detachments and sent out to guard the various bridges and tunnels in the State. I was sent with a detachment of eight which was later increased to fourteen, to Belt, a mining town, eighteen miles from Great Falls, on tunnel duty. The railroad sidetracked a box-car for us and we camped in that and an army tent.

The second night we were there — (the lieutenant in charge of the details happened to be at our camp then)—about eleven p. m. we

heard a shot fired at the opposite end of the tunnel by our guard stationed there. We jumped into our clothes, grabbed our flashlights and ran pell-mell through the tunnel. The guard had seen two men—just glimpsed their heads over the top of the tunnel. The lieutenant sent us up the two cuts to the top of the tunnel where we formed a skirmish line. And this is really funny. He ordered us to advance across a wheat field and finally he spotted a light not far distant—perhaps a half mile, and shouted, "There's a target, boys—everybody shoot." Believe me, we all unloaded our guns. Then we advanced to the farmhouse, skirmished around it—hunted in the woods an hour and a half, but couldn't find a trace of the man. We all knew the light was in the farmhouse—all, except the lieutenant. The next day we wanted some milk, so we went to the farmhouse after it and found the folks nearly scared to death. We really had peppered the side of the house—broke the windows and had just missed hitting the farmer's wife in the head as she lay in bed—the shot had imbedded itself in the wall. The people were Germans and there were three Germans working for them—milking etc., who had come over since the war began. Looked queer, didn't it? The lieutenant apologized profusely. We skirmished over the hill and found a sack containing dynamite, about twenty feet from where the men were seen the night before. They had evidently dropped it when the guard fired to arouse us.

Our lieutenant turned it in at company headquarters at Great Falls and the tunnel guard was doubled at night—two men at each end.

Later the tunnel was visited by two more men and we went up again. But the wheat was too high and we couldn't find them. Our lieutenant had gone, so the house was spared.

By the way, our lieutenant was killed in France. We hated to lose him, he was such a dandy, fine fellow.

After that—no one was allowed over the top of the tunnel without a special railroad pass. The Railway Company sent a special government detective out to Belt on the case. He worked as a blacksmith while in town.

We were drilled daily in different army formations by our sergeant, and we used to use gophers for our target practice. The night before we left, three men tried to attack the tunnel guard. Now, we had built a crow's nest half-way up the hill above the tunnel and one man was stationed there. When the guard saw these three men look over the top of the tunnel he called to the man in the crow's nest. He started up—but slipped on a board and the noise warned the men. When he gained the top, his gun proved no good—so he threw it down and chased them, but they got away. The guard called us with a shot and we scoured the woods but could find no trace of them. Somehow, we always suspicioned the three Germans at the farmhouse.

The next day, we were relieved by railroad watchmen and went up to Great Falls for two days, on our way to Helena.

We had had such bad luck at Belt—we felt we needed a mascot—so we “swiped” a little cinnamon bear cub from a pen back of a saloon, got away with him in an auto and took him to Helena with us. When all our companies arrived in Helena they certainly had a collection of mascots—cockatoos, deers, bears and even wild coyotes.

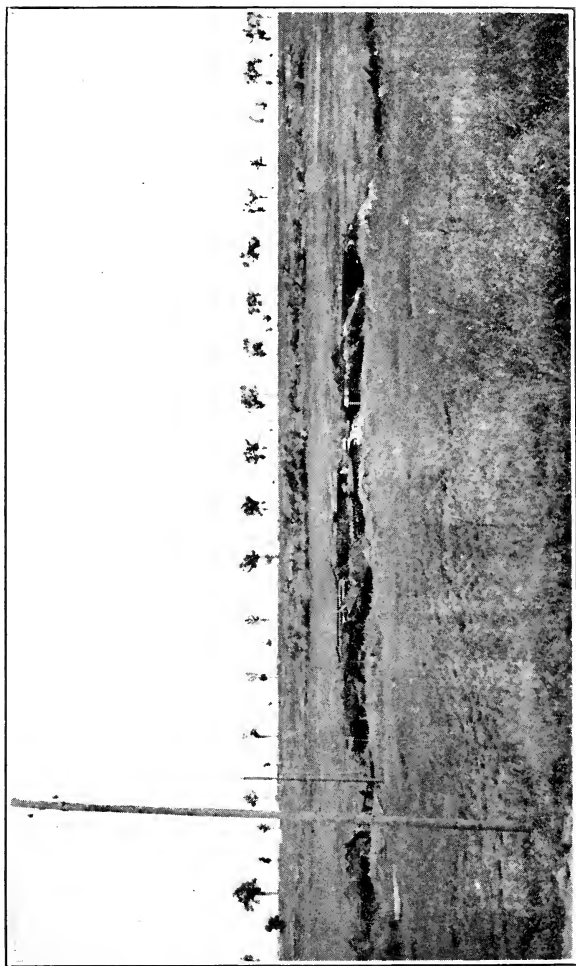
We had our training at old Fort Harrison, near Helena, and were drafted into the regular army August 5th, 1917. We were at Fort Harrison for two months. Some of the companies went out on guard duty again but most of us just trained. It was hard work too—sham battles and long runs over the hills. Four companies of us left for Camp Greene at Charlotte, North Carolina, in Sept., 1917. We had a wonderful watermelon feed at Atlanta, Georgia, and our bear was photographed by the newspaper men. Camp Greene wasn't finished when we arrived—so we had to go to work making parade grounds. Besides the Headquarters Company, we had Co.'s D, I and G. They spelled “Dig” and we sure did dig.

Charlotte was a friendly little town, with more churches according to the population than any other town in the world. The people flocked out in crowds to see our bear and invited us in to Sunday dinner, but we always had to go to church first.

While here, I was sent up for a S. C. D. (Surgeon's Certificate of Discharge) for a bad ankle bone, but was kept for clerical work. Late in October I was sent up to my company at Camp Mills, N. Y., and wrote out the company insurance and allotments.

The winter there was awful. It snowed and rained, our tents were flooded and the parade ground was a mud-hole. It was bitter cold most of the time and the Alabama troops suffered terribly.

Then the Sunset Division was formed and our company was one of its units. Each company received a hundred drafted men — all Western men—and we had to train them. After a few weeks of this we finished outfitting, were given new packs, new rifles and new shoes. Much to our sorrow our bear was put in the Zoo.



6-INCH FIELD ARTILLERY EMPLACEMENT, BEAUMONT



CHAPTER II.

IN FRANCE

At last the glad news came that we were to leave for France. So, on December the fifteenth we fairly sneaked onto the Leviathan—11,000 of us and 500 nurses. She is the largest ship afloat, the Vaterland of the Hamburg-American Line. When war was declared, her crew damaged her engines, but our naval engineers soon fixed them up and made her ready for use.

All flashlights and cameras were taken away and we sailed the next morning. The portholes of the ship were painted over so that no lights would show. She had really been transformed into a cruiser with big guns mounted on the deck and the finest marksmen in the navy on duty beside them and our lookouts could see eighteen miles. The Leviathan was the only ship sent across without a convoy. After we were out three days—we ran our course in a zig-zag fashion. There was no telling where we were going. The great game of "Somewhere" was in vogue and we were somewhat relieved when six submarine chasers and one aeroplane met us off the coast of Ireland. And then, we had the only excitement we had on the whole trip.

The aeroplane sighted a submarine and signaled to the chasers. Two of them went ahead

of us and threw up a smoke screen while we went ahead at our usual speed. Those chasers were little, but, Oh, My! They carried a crew of one hundred and ten men and they could spot a submarine two miles away and hit it before it had time to submerge.

We anchored at the mouth of the Mersey River, England, and lay there all night. Christmas Day, we arrived at Liverpool and had Christmas dinner on board the ship—a dandy turkey dinner.

On the 26th, we were transferred directly from the ship to the train. We were not allowed ashore but what I saw of Liverpool from the ship seemed quaint and old fashioned. We arrived at Winchester, a very large rest and training camp in Southern England, at night—and the next day I had my first glimpse of a German prisoner. He certainly looked odd to me. And too, I saw English girls in uniform working in officer's billets.

On Dec. 28th we were sent down to Southampton and crowded like flies onto a ship for "The Great Adventure." The Channel was fearfully rough—and—"all lights out" made it worse. We had no idea where we were to land, and boys who had enjoyed the ocean trip were fearfully seasick. Believe me, that was some night.

We were glad to see La Havre in the morning—glad to march three miles back to an English rest camp and feel we had at last reached our goal. There were quite a few German prisoners here—strange looking fellows—some in smiles and some sullen. Their French guards looked like Japanese and I noticed the long slender bayonets on their guns.

Fourteen of us were crowded into tents supposed to be occupied by eight. There was snow on the ground, it was very cold and the food was "punk"—just bread, cheese, tea and jam.

In the English Y. M. C. A. I met an English soldier who asked me in broad Cockney why the American troops had come to France. "We can't whip Fritz—so, it's a cinch, you can't." I had my opinion of him—and of our boys—but I held my tongue.

We rested two days—if you could call it that, and were ordered off to "Somewhere"—at least, we marched down to the freight yards. The streets were so narrow and the houses so old, that I felt as if I were in some ancient city.

We were loaded into box-cars—little French ones that hold "40 hommes or 8 cheveaux" (forty men or eight horses). We had fifty men in our car.

I shall never forget that box-car. We found some wine casks in the railroad yards and after helping ourselves, we filled our canteens. We had to pay for that wine, months afterwards, (just before our company left.) We certainly were happy; we were so sure that we were bound straight for the front.

Oh! that box-car was cold. At last, one of us lit upon the happy expedient of building a fire on the floor. We did, and nearly smoked ourselves out, at least, we smoked ourselves beyond recognition, and to add to the excitement, our car caught fire and the train had to stop until we put it out.

After two days of this sort of hardship—we thought it was real hardship too, (we didn't know what the months would bring)—our "40 men or 8 horses car" arrived at La Courtine in the central part of France. Talk about being disappointed. La Courtine was a quaint old-fashioned town on a hill—a replica of so many French villages. About a half-mile out of town was a fort with large barracks. One of these was full of imprisoned Russian officers.

Revolutions were the fad in Russia—so true to type these Russians started a revolution among themselves in the barracks and the French turned machine guns on them. The windows were shattered and the bricks clipped off by the flying bullets. When the French finally entered the building, they found very few Russians unhurt and these few willing gave themselves up. The dead and wounded strewed the floor—our first bit of war.

We were at La Courtine one unforgettable week. Not only on account of the above incident, but because our rations were short—only canned willy to eat, and we had no tobacco, and the French tobacco was so rotten we couldn't smoke it. I would have given five dollars for a sack of Bull Durham.

Then we were loaded into box-cars again for "Somewhere." Snow covered the ground and it was bitter cold.

Finally we arrived at Langres in the Haute-Marne district. There was plenty of snow here and it was very cold in the large old brick and stone barracks where we were billeted. The cement floors were so hard to sleep on, one

of the boys said they were sure "terra firma," which was the Latin for "terribly hard."

Langres was an interesting place. It is, as you know, one of the oldest towns in France and is surrounded by a wall twelve feet high. The old moat is still there, too—tho' it is dry now. The streets are so very narrow that the people walked in them instead of on the sidewalks.

The French people were very polite to us and one instinctively felt that they were a pleasure loving people, tho' precious little pleasure they had had since the war began. And children—why, they were everywhere and they stared at us as the West Indian natives must have stared at Columbus,—but give them a "sou" or a "clacker," as we called the big French half-penny and penny and they were suddenly galvanized into life—just tickled to death.

We could buy everything cheap too, until the French found out that we were "easy" and then the prices jumped skyward. We had great fun buying things tho'. One of the boys wanted eggs—so he spotted one of these little dairy stores, went in and crowed. He got the eggs.

Langres was a huge training school for officers, and they were trained for all branches of the army. Here they had a trench and mortar school, school of the line and many others. We filled all the jobs as orderlies—so that gave us plenty of time to visit the cafe. That cafe was our center of amusement. It tickled us at first—us from Montana. There were plenty of tables and chairs all right, but the bar was so small. All kinds of wine back of the bar, but

no beer on tap. That bar surely needed Americanizing. All the beer was in bottles—first at half franc—later at three-fourths franc, or 75 centimes. We call our restaurants “cafes”—but a cafe is really a drinking place. This one, in Langres had a pretty barmaid and we used to hold lengthy conversations—she and I—with the aid of my “Easy French for the Soldier.” That book left out all the really important words. At any rate, I progressed marvelously in the wines—the red and the white—vin rouge and vin blanc (there should have been a blue one) though my pronunciation was atrocious. Imagine an American with a Irish brogue talking French.

At ten p. m. the cafe closed—tho’ all shades were tightly drawn as soon as lights were lit for fear of air-raids, and Lord knows, they were numerous enough.

Not far from Langres—on a side hill—a fountain gushed forth from the mouth of an image of some prehistoric animal, and flowed down to two bathing pools, on different levels, below. The stone was covered with carved names. They told us that these pools belonged to Julius Caesar and that his wives (?) were fond of bathing here. It certainly looks ancient enough—the stone work is so weather-beaten. Evidently the upper pool was for bathing and the lower one for “sunning”—for it was edged with large flat rocks.

One day while I was there another soldier came up who had been imbibing too much “vin rouge.” Standing very close to the pond—he lectured to me on Caesar and his bathing propensities, with appropriate gestures, when suddenly he slipped

and fell in, thus achieving the honor of being first—perhaps the only American soldier to bathe in Caesar's pool—for the soldiers were not allowed to use it.

I took my new friend to a nearby house to dry out and the lady of the house fed us eggs and potatoes during the process. When it came to eating—I tell you that boy was sober.

Later I made the acquaintance of two prominent motion-picture men who were both privates in Co. A, 29th Engineers, and a pianoplayer from the Orpheum circuit.

One evening, we four went out together and after several glasses of wine (vin blanc) we decided to form a quartette and call it the "Vin Blanc Quartette." It surely was "blank." We started out a-singing and decided to have a cognac "drive." It must have been a mighty drive for I awoke in the morning absolutely blank as to what had happened. They told me I'd been fighting a French dog. Whatever it was he certainly messed up my face.

We had one dandy song. It was dedicated to any young man who was looking for a sweetheart and it went like this:

*"Oh! she promised to meet me when the clock
struck half past four
At the stock-yards just four miles out of town.
She is cock-eyed, she is crazy,
She is knock-kneed, she is lazy,
She is cross-eyed and pigeon-toed and lame,
And her teeth are phony
From chewing Swiss bologna
She's freckle-faced consumptive Mary Jane,
Some Baby."*

We felt that this song was really touching — especially cheering to lonesome, lovesick soldiers.

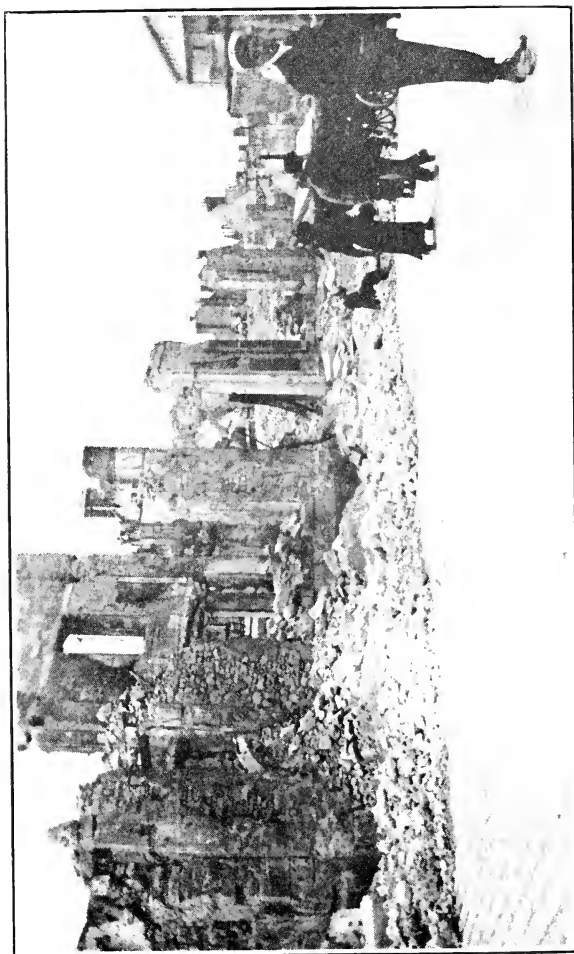
The Y. M. C. A. had a good hut at Langres, where we liked to gather and sing and we sang good songs, too. Sometimes, we would see a sad-looking boy, sitting by himself, thinking of home and mother perhaps—but not for very long, for some other doughboy would discover him and crack jokes with him until the lonesomeness was forgotten.

Langres boasted an old cathedral, too, built in 1700 A. D. or thereabouts. The tower had never been finished, but the interior was really wonderful.

The houses of the town were constructed of stone; even the floors were stone, and carpetless. The people didn't seem to know what carpets were, and the beds were the oddest things you ever saw—so high that they used a ladder to climb into them—and a feather-bed of down for a covering. The pesky thing kept slipping off at night. It really should have been anchored. All the furniture corresponded with the house—antique is the word.

There was nothing antique about the milkmaid; a dear, she was—who drove her dog-cart into town every morning, loaded with its cans of milk. She walked by it, goodness knows how far, but her wooden shoes kept her feet dry and clattered merrily along on the cobblestones.

The wagons of France are very high, two-wheeled carts and the horses are always hitched in single file, not side by side, as we hitch ours.



RUINS NEAR THIACCOURTE

The old hotel bus had a ladder hooked on one side of it, which used to puzzle me until I saw the driver lean it against the bus one day and climb up to bring the baggage down from the top. I certainly laughed at that and the joke was on me.

In our company we had an old man whom we had nick-named "Powder River," long before we left Montana. His favorite saying was, "Powder River—a mile wide and an inch deep—let 'er buck!" Every time he would say it, another old fellow in the company used to say "Hook 'em cow!" "Powder River" and "Hook 'em Cow" were great pals. They were a pair of comical ducks.

One day I saw "Hook 'em Cow" going down the street with a swell-looking French damsel and when I asked him how he had captured her, he answered, "Jist hooked her like a cow." Again, I saw "Powder River" in a black-jack game, and later when I asked him how he came out, he said, "I blowed up—but Powder River's a mile wide and an inch deep—so let 'er buck. I'm just as happy without money as I am with it."

"Scotty" was in our company, too, and he was every inch a fighter. But "Scotty" liked the amber foam too well and spent most of his time in the guard-house, which didn't worry "Scotty" in the least. I remember seeing him once—before the M. P.'s had gotten him, trying to lead two goats that he had picked up on the road somewhere, into town. I laughed so hard I had to sit down. He would pull and pull those goats and when the goats refused to move, he tried

to push them. Time after time they butted him over and Scotty was about to give up when the brilliant thought of milking them came to him. That proved a failure too, so he gave it up and meandered on down to the barracks, eluded the guard and finished the day in peaceful sleep.

I went on down to the Y. M. C. A. hut. It happened to be quiet there—the tin-pan piano was still and silence reigned. When it is quiet a doughboy always thinks of home—so I wrote to my mother dear, and sent her this little poem which I had written and called

“MY MOTHER”

*“Lonely I sit and think of the past,
And dream of love too sweet to last.
Around me blooms many a fragrant flower
The gardens are spread, rich lawn and bower,
My little ranch home with a porch so wide
To which I once brought a blushing bride
And when she came to thrill my soul with bliss
She faded and vanished by another man’s kiss.
But I have a friend, most lovable of all
I can almost hear her gentle call.
Sometimes her gentle spirit is with me,
Sometimes her smiling face I see.
Then I laugh and can spurn any other
As this dear one is my mother.
I’m getting older—the sun is setting—I am
chilled
Mother dear, your place is waiting, never filled.”*

As stated before, Langres was an officers' training camp and a strenuous one at that. This war required officers of both fine brains and fine physique. The men were very serious about their work and seemed to realize the hardships they would have to endure, but many of them could not stand the strain physically and were placed in non-combatant units. The U. S. doughboys were over there to win the war, so only the finest received commissions, and believe me, every one of them made good. We had brainy men behind us from the highest official down and thanks to their management, the war was won.

In June, 1918, our Montana company was split up. All the privates were transferred into the 164th Infantry and the "non-coms" were to be sent "Somewhere." The 164th was to stay in Langres for permanent detail work and that meant that I would probably be there for the duration of the war. Now, I'd enlisted to fight so I took a chance, smuggled myself on the "non-com's" train and was sure that at last I was off for the front. Scotty was with me and as the train left in the evening, we got past the officers safely. The next day, though they saw us, nothing was said and we had a dandy trip, sort of an adventure, you know. The train stopped at a small village called St. Aingnan—then we hiked about twelve miles to another village called Montrichard and there we were billeted. Much to my disgust, I found that Montrichard was to be a training camp for casuals, men from the U. S. who had been sick and missed training. The "non-coms" had been sent there to train them and they sure

did. It required about three days to outfit them, then off to the front they would go, another bunch would arrive and the same performance would be gone thru again.

Instead of being sent to the guard-house, Scotty and I were given the "highly desirable" (?) position as "kitchen police." Talk about work! Every bunch of casuals seemed hungrier than the last ones and if eating fitted them for the front—they sure were fit. You never saw happier bunches.

Next to our kitchen was a private residence and the lady of the house was more than good to Scotty and I. When we were not busy she would invite us over to her parlor for a glass of rare old wine and some music. She had a piano and seemed to enjoy the ragtime music that I could play. She had never heard ragtime before, which probably accounts for it. Scotty would sing Scotch songs to my accompaniment and the lady would look at us in wonder. She used to invite Co. D's "non-com" quartette in too. Of course, I always butted into all quartette songs with my fine "Vin Blanc" tenor. I thought I could sing, but they told me it was rotten. I should worry! I always enjoyed myself making a noise anyway. This was our favorite song:

*"Drunk last night, drunk the night before,
Going to get drunk tonight as I never did before,
For when I'm drunk, I'm as happy as can be
And I am a member of Company 'D.'
Glorious, glorious, one keg of beer for the four
of us*

*Glory be to God that there are no more of us,
For the four of us can drink it all alone.*

We sang this, not because we really were drinking men of such caliber, but because it had plenty of harmony in it. You understand.

Another funny thing, when you weren't the chief actor, was to watch a doughboy try to talk to a pretty French girl. The girl would talk in French—the soldier in English—their only word in common was "Oui"—the French for "yes" and it sounds like "wee." Then they would try talking with their hands like a couple of Hebrews and eventually they seemed to understand each other, tho' it was rich to watch them.

Montrichard is surrounded by vineyards and farms and the grass is green the year around. "Keepers" who take care of the large vineyards controlled by English interests live in caves in the hillside where the wine is stored. They hold very responsible positions and have a great deal of work to do. After the grapes are picked and the juice pressed out—it is stored in large vats in these caves and left there to age.

The French use wine as we use tea and coffee and seldom eat a meal without their glass of "Vin Rouge."

There is an old castle at Montrichard centuries old, where, it is said, King Richard was imprisoned for five years—then escaped through a tunnel dug by one of his friends. We used it as a guardhouse.

The old cells were absolutely without any light and the old tank was still there, in which people were drowned in ancient times, for various offenses. The sides of the tank were

about ten feet high and the water very deep—so there was no chance for escape.

The chapel must have been built before the castle was, it looked so much older and more weather-beaten.

One day, I watched the little children of the village make their first communion. The little girls were dressed in white with long white veils while the boys were in black with white gloves and straw hats. Before making communion, they marched through the village streets—the children leading, carrying a large banner, followed by the priests in their robes and then the relatives — all solemnly singing. The people by the roadside crossed themselves as the procession passed and I, remembering my own first communion in my far away childhood, did likewise. It was very impressive and it will always be one of my most precious memories of France.

A few days later a sad auto accident occurred in which a Y. M. C. A. worker and a private were killed. A squad of us was ordered to dig a grave for them in the cemetery. An old man, about ninety years of age, met us there to show us where to dig, and we learned that he had been the care-taker and grave-digger of this cemetery all his life. When we had dug one grave about four feet deep, we struck something hard and discovered a bone of a human being and a little later—"Shades of Yorick"—we dug up a skull and before our graves were finished, we had dug up two skeletons. The old man told us that when the graves were a certain number of years old,

they were dug up to make room for more graves. Only the vaults are never disturbed—so some of the cemeteries of France must be centuries old.

My “position” as kitchen police seemed to be a never-ending job—just one bunch after another of tired, hungry casuals. It got on my nerves and I began to think that “The Front” was a myth—so I decided to ask the captain if I could go to the front with the next bunch of casuals.

The captain gave me permission to go, so I dropped my “position” as kitchen police immediately and went into training and I trained with a will. We were closer to the Huns now than we had been in Montana.

The Cher River ran close to our training grounds and one hour of our training each day was devoted to swimming. The boys who did not know how to swim were usually thrown in by our sturdy swimming instructors and it was a case of “sink or swim,” but it certainly put us in the pink of condition in a very short time.

At last we were notified that we were to leave and for fear our destination wouldn't suit me, I scouted around and much to my disgust found out that the next bunch of casuals were to be sent to the Alsace-Lorraine Front.

Now I knew there was very little fighting on that Front and I “thirsted for the fray”; so I asked the captain if I might wait and go with another bunch of casuals, but he absolutely refused me his permission to do this. So what could I do but just hide until the train had gone. I certainly was reprimanded for that stunt, but I will always be glad I did it—

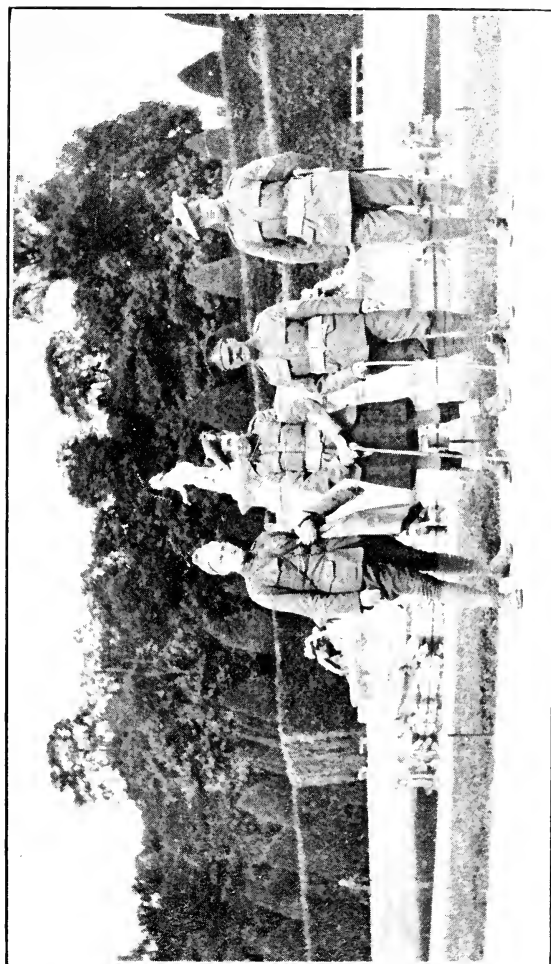
even tho' I had to go back to the kitchen as "kitchen police." More casualties came and trained and work went on as usual.

The Germans, at this time were making an advance on Paris and I felt sure that American soldiers would be used there, so when orders came that I was to leave for the front with the next train-load of casualties and I found out that our destination was to be somewhere near Paris, I was sure I had guessed right. There was one happy Yank in camp that night, for I felt now that I was on my way to the "big fight"—and I was sorry that Scotty had gone to Alsace-Lorraine with the other train-load.

There were about five hundred of us and our departure was kept very secret. We were lined up about 2:00 A. M. and escorted to a lonely depot three miles distant. At 3:30 we were loaded into box-cars and off we went.

The trip was uneventful, but we boys were certainly happy, for we were really going to a fighting front. We tapped all the "joy water" kegs we could find on our trip as we went thru the various villages. Our lives were at stake—so we felt that "we should worry!" We'd be happy for the little while we had left.

We passed through some very interesting towns and villages. Orleans, a city of 70,000 is a very large and beautiful town of very ancient origin. It lies on the right bank of the Loire and is surrounded by a wonderful forest. Joan of Arc led the French troops when they retook Orleans from the English in 1429—and after that she was called "The Maid of Orleans."



IN VERSAILLES



The next place of interest was Versailles where the Peace Treaty has since been signed. The palaces here with their wonderful lawns and gardens made a lasting impression on me. Many famous men have met in Versailles and world-famous treaties have been signed there.

Our car passed along the River Seine and thru the outskirts of Paris to the suburb of St. Denis and at last we arrived at the very old city of Meaux, and here our railroad journey ended. Meaux has a cathedral which dates back to the 12th century. There was a large steel mill there also and I saw a great number of wrecked aeroplanes, sent there to be repaired.

We stayed at Meaux for about three hours, then we were loaded in trucks and sent to the Front near Chateau Thierry.

I was sure that I would see action then, and say! was I tickled?—I'll say I was! Some happy "soldat" as the French say. The fun was about to commence, and believe me,—I meant to make a few of those Germans pay for the Lusitania. My Irish blood was up and you know an Irishman will fight at the drop of a hat. I felt if ever I sighted a Hun—goodnight for him. I can't describe the pitch of feeling to which I was worked up—I was boiling mad. The rest of the boys felt the same way I did, and we pledged ourselves to do up a few of the dirty beasts before we turned our checks in.

We went on and on over dusty roads—I've never seen so much dust. We perspired so, our faces were caked with mud, and before long we came within the sound of the cannon.

It was getting dusk with no lights except the flashes from the cannon when they were fired, flashes that threw a weird gleam into the gathering darkness. It was as if some giant hand were opening roaring furnace doors and shutting them again with a tremendous bang.

Our truck passed by a camouflaged gun just as it went off and we nearly jumped out of our skins—it was so unexpected. French soldiers were operating it and they held their hands over their ears when they fired it. We passed through many small villages where there wasn't a sign of a civilian. All were deserted with only a few French soldiers on guard. The farther toward the front we went, the more camouflaged guns we saw. They were usually the world-famous 75's—the gun that wrought more havoc with the Hun's army and supplies than any other. It is really a marvelous gun.

We were ordered to unload at a little village called Chaumont-en-Vixin, near Vaux, and report to the headquarters of the 9th Infantry Regulars of the 2nd Division (The 2nd Division was composed of the 9th and 23rd Infantry and the 5th and 6th Marines, besides the usual batteries of artillery, machine gun battalions, engineers, etc., in all about 28,000 men) to be placed in different companies of the 9th Infantry. I was assigned to Co. F and after being loaded up with ammunition, was sent down to where the company was holding the line about a mile and a half from the Paris road. When I arrived there with some others, everything was very quiet. But presently I began to feel that there would soon be something doing, and be-

lieve me, there was! The French bombarded the little town of Monneaux and I never had heard so much noise in my life before. We could scarcely make ourselves heard. The Germans had been holding the town for two hours when at 2:00 A. M. orders came for us to take the town. My wish had at last come true. The barrage kept just ahead of us and away we went, but we were too impetuous, in too much of a hurry, and some of the boys ran into our own barrage and were killed. That taught us a much needed lesson and in all of our other battles, we worked in fine co-operation with the artillery.

At last we took Monneaux, but to our great disappointment not a German was to be seen. They had evacuated the town during the bombardment, evidently in great haste. When the civilians left the town during the advance of the Germans, they had to leave so quickly that everything they owned was left behind—their cattle, chickens, rabbits, etc. The artillery killed some of them, but after we took the town, they made many a feast for our tired, hungry doughboys. And sometimes we certainly were hungry. There were some very fine homes in the town, too, in which we were billeted, and say, it was just swell to lie in one of those big beds all covered up with feather-beds of down after sleeping out on the cold, hard ground.

We used the cellars too, to great advantage during heavy shell-fire. No use taking chances. Our line was established on the outskirts of Monneaux within a hundred yards of the Paris road. So this road, down which so many men

and ladies of high degree had gone into Paris, was now "No Man's Land." The first thing we did was to dig in—and dig in just deep enough so as to be somewhat protected from shell-fire. In none of our campaigns did we ever stop long enough to dig trenches such as the French and Germans had done. The holes we dug, tho', came in mighty handy, and at times, there would have been a great many more casualties if it had not been for them.

We were really lucky to be able to establish our line here, for we were in a little valley about twenty feet wide with a fine stream running through it and we used that stream to good advantage and thought of it often in the days that followed, when we had to lay in mud, with no chance of a wash, until we were relieved.

We held this line for thirty-nine days before we made an attack and I want to tell a few of the experiences we had during those days.

CHAPTER III.

DUTIES OF THE DOUGHBOYS

We were divided into squads and each squad had its position in the line. And that position was our home. Believe me—it was some home. A hole in the ground for a house, the sky for a roof, two army blankets for a covering and your helmet for a pillow. It wasn't quite as luxurious as a mansion, but we really enjoyed it—for it was so out of the ordinary.

Next to us, French poilus occupied about half of Hill 204. The Germans still held the other half. Next to the French were the 5th and 6th Marines, holding the line at Château Thierry—and they were having a hot time. Hill 204 had to be taken before our line could be straightened out. We had expected the French to take it the day after we took our position on June 1st, 1918, but the Germans made the attack. We had a fine view of the battle. It was a great sight. The Germans attacked in mass formation and the French machine gunners mowed them down by the hundreds so that their attack was a complete failure. Then the German artillery turned loose on our lines and “wowie”—those shells hit close. If we happened to be away from our respective holes when a bombardment began, we dived for the first one handy, for any hole was “home sweet home” when the shells began to burst near us. It

really was laughable tho' to watch every dough-boy dive at the same instant. We all developed some speed. The bombardment would last about fifteen or twenty minutes and then quietness would reign—and the quietness was wonderful. Unconsciously we would breathe deep sighs of relief and Oh! such a wave of thankfulness would surge thru our hearts.

Perhaps, we would have peace for an hour or so, and then "whiz-bang" and another bombardment would commence, and so on "ad infinitum." Those were the kind of pleasure-pills Jerry gave us during our thirty-nine days out-lying there. He always shelled us, when he thought he would catch us unawares, but we were wise to his tactics and the way he played the game.

The German sniper was the one we had to watch out for—for he was the trickiest soldier the German had and an absolutely dead shot. When he shot—he shot to kill and rarely missed his mark. He used a wonderfully accurate sight on his gun called a telescope sight. The trouble with the nasty devil was that he was so hard to find—for he was usually so well concealed and camouflaged. But once we located him, that was the end of Herr Sniper, for we sent out a small patrol, flanked him on all sides—so as to make escape impossible and proceeded to remove him from this earthly sphere. A sniper never was taken prisoner.

Once, several of our men were killed by a sniper that we couldn't seem to spot. For two days we watched continuously, with strong glasses before we located him.

Several days before an old cow, peacefully grazing in "No Man's Land," had been killed by a shrapnel shell. At night, the Huns had sent a patrol out, hauled the dead cow in and substituted a pasteboard cow with a sniper inside—prepared for devilment. But he made the great mistake of moving around too much and accidentally moved the "dead" cow. One of our sergeants saw this and ordered a few of our men to fire at it. Goodnight, Sniper.

Another sniper concealed himself near us in a tree. He was quite cleverly camouflaged for he had painted himself, uniform and gun, all green. It was hard to locate him too, but we made him look "green" when we did.

The German machine gunners were also very clever about concealing themselves and usually stuck to their guns until the end. A bunch of us ran into some machine gunners one day who had been chained to the trees close by their guns by their own men. The Huns were cruel both to their own men and the enemy.

One place I remember particularly. It was in the Chateau Thierry drive. The Huns had painted a large Red Cross on the tower of a half-ruined town hall beyond Vaux. We thought they were using it for a hospital and our artillery never thought of shelling it. Now here's what Jerry did: He had a machine gun planted up there in the tower and shot down a lot of our troops, going thru, before we discovered where the shells came from. When we went to take it, we had to break thru a heavy trap door, padlocked on the outside, mind you. Those Dutchmen were locked in by their own

men—and when we did get in, we paid them back for the dead boys in khaki along the road. They tried the “Kamerad” stuff, but we threw them out the window and when they got through falling 150 feet, they didn’t man any more machine guns.

Off duty, we were a happy bunch — the Yankee doughboy usually is. Fear never entered our heads and what time we did have to ourselves, we spent in the little deserted village of Monneaux. We gathered in all the cattle, pigs, chickens and rabbits and kept them corraled—and fed them, so when we wanted a swell feed, we had it.

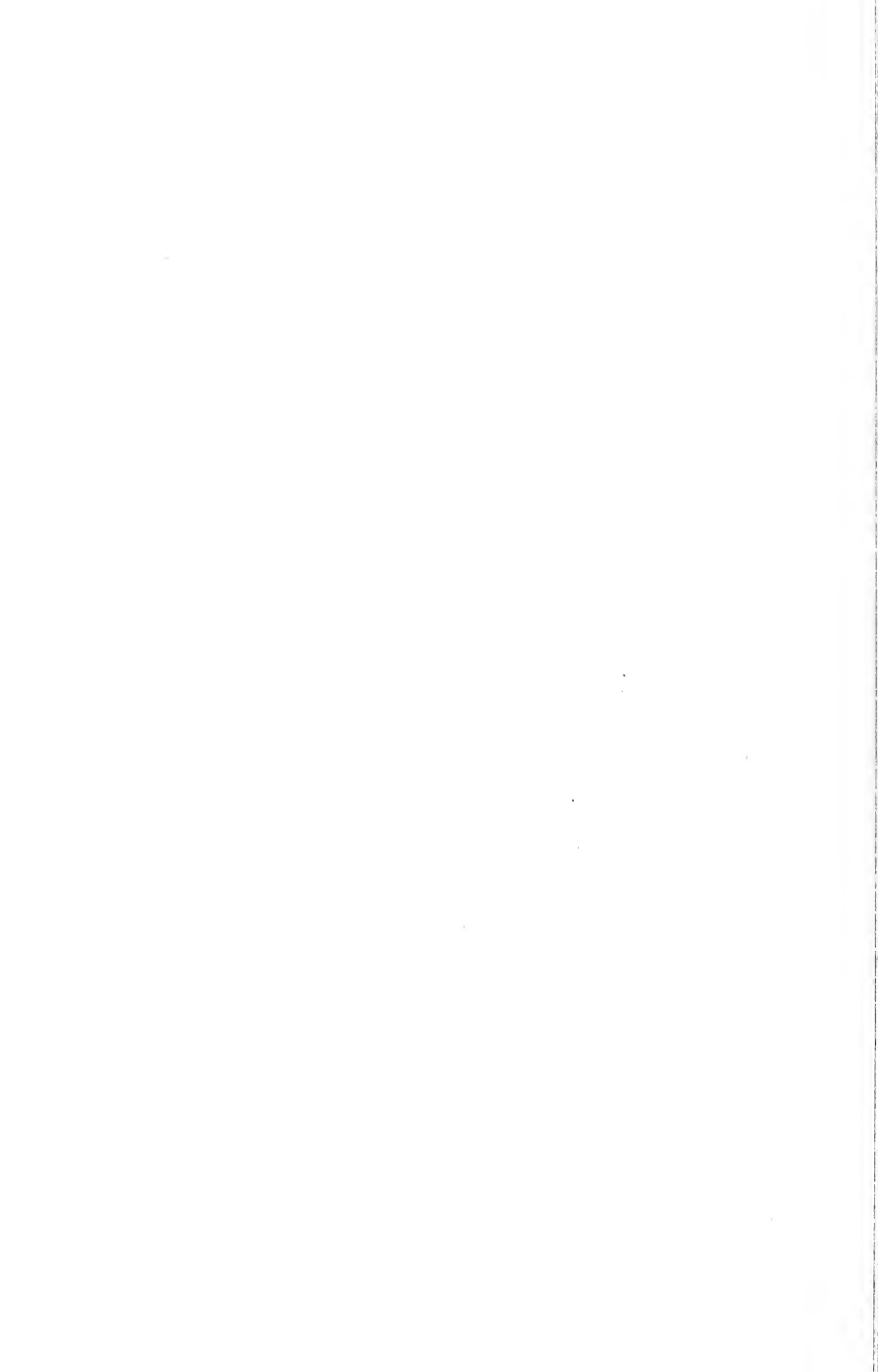
I made a rather good start at learning the butcher’s trade in Monneaux. One day, I was rambling around looking at the empty houses and ran into a real classy-looking home. Everything was in its place just as the people had left it—so I decided to take possession of it for the time being. The kitchen was a dandy one and I was hungry—so I decided to have a feed. The garden was full of “green stuff” and potatoes and I got a hind leg of a pig that had been butchered in our corral. Gee! but that was a feed that can never be duplicated.

I roasted that leg in the oven with the potatoes and fixed up everything else eatable that I could find in the garden.

But you can’t enjoy anything alone, so I invited a couple of French soldiers in off the street to dine with me. Now, they knew of a cellar in which there was still some rare old champagne, so they hurried off to fetch some for our banquet. We ate and drank to our heart’s content and forgot the war and all its miseries.



TRENCH, NEAR BEAUMONT, NORTH OF TOUL—FIRST SECTOR HELD BY AMERICANS



Our company liked to come back to Monneaux in the daytime and pile into the big "comfy" beds in the deserted houses and sleep. We were so busy at night that we had to sleep in the daytime.

Once I was peacefully sleeping in my mansion when without the slightest warning a shell burst in the room next to me and nearly covered me with plaster. Out I tumbled and made for the cellar, where I slumbered deeply during the rest of the bombardment.

This house had a very fine piano in it and we boys enjoyed it so—kept it busy every minute we were free. Two of the boys found a trombone and a bass horn and we formed a jazz band and called it the "Doughboys' Jazz." We found some stovepipe hats and swallow-tail coats too and we'd dress up in those.

We were a continual surprise to the French soldiers in the village. They used to look at us as if we were maniacs. We didn't worry about that tho' and we did have the time of our lives.

We gave a cabaret show one day—with our band and dress suits. It was simply swell and we laughed so much we never noticed the bombardment, tho' the town was under heavy shell-fire at the time. We couldn't let a little thing like that stop our show.

We had "Fatima," the fattest person in captivity, and the greatest ballet dancer in the world, at least in our estimation. He wore such wonderful gowns, oh! baby! A petticoat and a corset. When he would ballet—you know, dance a skirt dance or so, right when

it began to get interesting, his foot would slip and down he would go with a crash, a la Fatty Arbuckle.

"Cannon Ball Pete" gave a monologue, in which he declared he could eat more cannonballs than the Kaiser could manufacture.

Another one of the boys put on a good act entitled "Dirty Eva," the charming society girl from Syracuse, N. Y. and the world at large. She could eat mud with as much relish as we would fried chicken. "Dirty Eva" was so dirty that we used to bathe her with water from the Marne, and save the water and use it as a cement substitute to wall up our holes in the ground.

"Bayonet Jim," the next on the program could swallow a bayonet with ease and pleasure, and cut off his right arm without a pain or twitch. Whenever I touched him for some cash he would say, "You can have anything I have, even my right arm." He was a "wonderful" man.

We thought our show was simply immense and we were wondering how we could make arrangements for a world tour when "Lou" came in. Sounds like a female, doesn't it? But it was only our lieutenant and he told us we were great deal better soldiers than actors, so we took his word for it and went back out to the lines to prepare for our night's work, which was usually made up of trench digging, patrol duty and barbed wire stringing. I enjoyed stringing the wire entanglements. It was really interesting work.

Our trenches here were only three feet deep—so we needed the entanglements, for, in case

of an enemy attack, our rifles could do a deadly amount of work before the Huns got through the wire.

The troops stationed back of the front line, usually in a small wood, formed details and cut stakes for us and brought them and the wire down to us, two miles ahead, after it grew dark.

Then a platoon was detailed from the front line trenches to string the wire. Odd, but the coils of wire used to make me homesick for the ranch. I'd strung so much of it there, for such a different purpose.

Any-way, we left the trenches at ten and worked until two in the morning. A machine gun and gunners were always sent out ahead of us, in case of an attack, so we felt just as safe as if we were on our own doorstep and even grew so bold that we talked out loud. Soldiers have a queer way of getting used to most anything, and we are all fatalists after a fashion.

We usually went out about sixty yards in front of our first line and if we worked fast and it wasn't too muddy, we could string seventy-five yards of entanglements in a night. The French and German strung their wire criss-cross, about the height of the knee, to tangle up advancing soldiers, but the Yanks used a different system. We drove a middle stake, leaving about four feet above the ground. The tall men of the platoon had to drive these. We used a wooden mallet covered with a gunny-sack to drown the sound of the blows. Then, on each side of the row of tall stakes, we drove a row of shorter ones and then we strung the

wire. Sometimes we had gloves—usually we didn't—and we had to be careful or we either got tangled in our own wire or got our hands badly torn.

A wire was first strung along the tall stakes. No staples were used, the wire was just wound around them. Then wires were strung criss-cross from these stakes to the short ones on either side and lastly, along the two rows of short ones. Twisting it around the stakes was usually where we tore our hands and swore at the Germans. We blamed everything on them, you know, from the mud, up to delayed letters from our sweethearts.

Sometimes a lieutenant, sometimes a sergeant, was boss of the platoon. We worked until the first streaks of morning light shot across the sky.

Before an attack at dawn our engineers crept out and cut the German wire entanglements. Sometimes the tanks would break them down for us, but they couldn't clear the wire away and I have often had my leggings cut to ribbons.

We rolled a huge barrel of wine up from Minotte, put it out in front of our lines and camouflaged it with hay. Then at night before we went out to string our allotment of wire, we each took a drink for ambition's sake, but when we came back, we drank to our heart's content and slept the sleep of a good soldier, ready to attack at dawn.

All our trench digging was done at night also. In front of our first line another trench was always dug to be used for day and night

work by observers, machine gunners and snipers. When we were thru digging, we always camouflaged the thrownout dirt with hay for this reason: It is very hard for the aerial observer in an aeroplane to distinguish the changes such as trenches, shellholes, etc., made in the night. So aerial photographs are taken and these are very carefully compared and the changes there seen noted. Thus we tried to camouflage our digging so as to show no change in the German air photographers' work.

When a Hun aeroplane would come over our lines, we usually stood very still. That made it hard for the aviator to see us. But there was one plane that used to come over our lines every morning and take photographs. We watched him quietly for about five mornings, then we got tired of this "bird"—so we decided to shoot at him the next morning if he came. By George, he was right there on the dot. When he was about two hundred feet above us, we all let go at him. We thought he had a charmed life, for our shots never fazed him. Next morning, we let him have it again, but he sat up there absolutely unconcerned and took his blamed pictures, so we were ordered to bring an anti-aircraft gun up and place it on the front line. The next morning, when he came back that gun made quick work of him. He was brought down in our lines and placed on the "croaking sheet."

The construction of the aeroplane was new to us. The body was made of steel, oval-shaped—no wonder our rifle bullets just glanced off when we hit it. But the bullets from "anti" didn't—bad luck to the aviator. It is very difficult

to hit a mark as the gunners have to judge the distance—so the shells are timed to break as near as possible to the aeroplane. The aircraft shells break into small pieces the same as the high explosive shells—but they must either hit some vital part of the machine or wound the aviator before the aeroplane is brought down.

An observation balloon didn't last very long at the front either. They were used principally to direct artillery fire on the ammunition and food stuffs trains or autos going up to the German lines. The aviators would finish these balloons up in a hurry. They would soar up in the clouds, dive down over the balloon and drop a fire bomb which would set it afire. All we would see was a large burst of flame. Then the signal man in the balloon would jump out—the parachute attached to his back would open up and he would land safely in our lines ready to go up in another balloon and spy on "Fritz."

The signal men of the army had very dangerous work to do, and were under shell-fire most of the time, laying lines of communication as fast as the doughboys advanced, and they had to work fast to keep up with us. They laid lines of communication to the artillery also, in order to direct the barrage fire. Without a barrage in front of us, an advance would have been almost certain death. Not that we feared death, but we didn't want to waste any good men.

Practically all the "day fighting" was done by means of these communication lines run to the artillery by the signal men and their hazardous work kept them on the jump. They slept

when and where they could and worked with shells flying all the time, and their lines had to be strung on something even tho the trees and fences were almost obliterated.

I remember once when a soldier had been killed and almost buried by a high explosive shell. Only his arm still stuck up out of the earth.

A signal man came by with his wire and not finding anything else, wound it around the upright hand and from there to the stump of a tree that had been blown to pieces by artillery fire.

Another signal man came by with a touch of sentiment in him and took time to scribble something on a piece of wood and stick it up beside the upright arm. It was "Still doing his bit." It showed the spirit of our boys—game to the end.

The signal work at night consisted of sending up rockets and lighted parachutes. They spoke a language all their own that "Fritz" couldn't understand. A code wouldn't have done him any good for sometimes the rockets meant one thing and sometimes another.

The rockets or flares were used principally to locate enemy patrols and to watch for any advance the enemy might try to make. The lighted parachutes were used to signal the artillery, in case they were falling short, as was sometimes the case.

On July 3rd, at midnight, the whole line celebrated for one hour. Say boy, that was some celebration, and Jerry must have thought his last days had come, but we were only giving

him a little exhibition of what was going to happen to him.

If I found wire-stringing interesting, I certainly found night patrol work exciting. We always went out at ten o'clock at night and what was left of us came back at two in the morning, just before dawn.

There were always eight or twelve of us with a sergeant in command. We blackened our faces like "nigger" comedians, put gunny sacks over our well-worn shiny helmets, crawled thru our barbed wire and began our hunt in the dark, in "No Man's Land" for a German patrol. We carried both rifles and hand grenades.

Now, there are nearly always forty men in a German patrol—about ten with rifles and the rest with hand grenades, which we called "potato mashers" from their shapes. These "mashers" are dangerous contrivances and being near one when it explodes means "lights out" for you—so we sure had to keep our eyes open, or rather ears open, when we were out on night patrol.

What we wanted principally was prisoners for information. So when we met a German patrol, in a bunch, we used our grenades; if we met them singly, we used our rifles. The men in the trenches, of course, knew we were having a skirmish, but they always let us fight it out alone. If any of our men were hurt—other men were sent out from our trenches to bring them in.

If we brought in any German prisoners, we used to scare the life out of them and say!—the poor fools would come through with all kinds

of information and it was generally the truth. Talk about cowards—they were so dead scared of being shot that they couldn't get their information out fast enough and they all ran true to form, with few exceptions. Sometimes, we've had them sneak out of their trenches and walk straight over to ours, give themselves up. and tell everything they knew about their military situation.

Out at night, we had to exercise all the skill and strategy that we knew, for sometimes German patrols would pull off some new stunt that we weren't wise to. Usually the whole patrol worked together, sending one or two men out to meet our patrol—if we ran across each other—while the others would conceal themselves nearby, ready to slice us up.

Fritz thought we'd be fools enough to go at him in a bunch, but we didn't. We'd send one or two men out to flank them while the rest would get ready to do up the rest of their bunch.

I remember a skirmish one night on the Paris road. It ran between our trenches—a broad beautiful road, that had been bordered by two rows of beautiful trees, now torn and shattered and uprooted by shell-fire.

We bumped into one of "Jerry's" patrols, threw our grenades into it and used our rifles with telling effect for we could hear the wounded Germans a-hollering.

It got pretty hot for us, too, for they threw their beastly "potato mashers." Three of our men were wounded and the rest of us scattered and hunted for shell-holes until we could find

our way back to our trenches—crawl back, you know, through the mud. When we finally got back, another patrol was sent out to look for the wounded Huns, but they had been gathered up by their own men and carried back to the trenches. A few nights later, one of our patrols brought us in some prisoners who gave us information that helped us later when we attacked Vaux.

Another night, our patrol stumbled right on to the Hun's trench—and the trenches here were only holes three feet deep, just for protection in case of shell-fire — and their sentry shouted, "Who goes there?" in broken English. Luckily, one of our men could speak German fluently—so he yelled back that he was one of a German patrol that had been out in "No Man's Land," and passed the sentry. The rest of us laid low in the tall wheat. Pretty soon he came back bursting with news. He said it would be "darned easy" to take some prisoners—so we crept quietly up to the very edge of the trench. We listened to "Fritzzy" talking for a minute, then one of the boys threw a hand grenade in and the fun began. They came out like a bunch of bees and we had a good five minute scrap—came off victors with eight prisoners, including the sentry, and called it a night's work.

Sometimes we would locate a machine gun in the daytime that was holding us up, and our patrols would creep out at night through the barbed wire, flank the machine gun nest, throw a grenade into it and — goodnight — "Jerry" didn't bother us any more.

Rainy nights made the work harder, for the boys had to crawl through the mud and slime until they were wet through and caked with mud and sometimes when we jumped into a shell hole for safety we would land in three or four feet of water. But the work paid, for the information we dug out of our prisoners, helped a lot in planning our attacks.

When we were in the front line trenches our rations and "chuck" came up to us at 10:00 P. M. and 2:00 A. M.—just four hours apart and that had to do us for the whole next day—so we always ate the "chow" at night and saved our rations for the daytime. You see, if the "chow detail," as we called the doughboys who brought our food up to us, came up in the daytime, sure as fate, Fritz would spot them and shells would come from all directions—Fritz would do anything to keep us from getting something to eat.

For thirty-nine days we held that line under continuous shell-fire—and kept the Germans from getting into Paris. This wasn't what the Yanks came over for tho'—they wanted action and they soon got it. Holding the line wasn't sufficient, however, for it soon became imperative to push the enemy back in order to capture his strong positions and observation posts.

Then we sure had our first real battle and our Second Division did itself proud for here's what we had opposing us—what we'd been holding that line against: The 87th German Division called the "Aluminum Division," most of the 197th, 237th, 10th, 28th, and 5th German Guard Divisions—so you see—we had some

battle. It was no wonder that the Huns thought, as a captured letter later expressed it, "that the Americans were too fiery."

Up to July 1, 1918, against the most powerful opposition that the German Army could exert, the Second Division had advanced its front an average distance of a little more than two kilometers (a kilometer is $\frac{5}{8}$ ths of a mile) and had taken more than eight hundred prisoners and ninety machine guns and automatic rifles. We must remember too, that this was at a time when Germany was loudly proclaiming the overthrow and dissolution of the Allied armies.

As a matter of fact, it was precisely at this time that the German leaders realized that the scale was swinging against them, slowly but surely, and it was the Battle of Chateau-Thierry that showed the first great test of the Yank and Boche.

CHAPTER IV.

BATTLE OF VAUX

This was my first real battle and really it meant more to me than any of the others, for it meant that my test had come. The little village of Vaux lay in the creek valley between Hill 204, taken by the Yanks and French on June 7th and 8th, and the positions north of Bois de la Morette taken by the 9th Infantry. It was a little innocent-looking place, but it didn't pay to be deceived by its looks, for the little stone houses of Vaux were fortresses, armed with machine guns, its cellars were bomb proofs filled with large numbers of Germans and its streets were filled with hidden traps and ghastly surprises for the enemy. The Paris-Metz road which ran through the village certainly laid bare the strategy that Fritz hoped to fool us with. He had dug "tank traps" in it—holes about twenty feet deep—covered with thin boards, just below the level of the road then filled up with dirt to the road level. It was practically impossible to detect them, but a tank, going down the road would break through and "au revoir." These traps were tricky, but our engineers discovered them before any appreciable amount of damage was done.

The little village of Vaux thrust out a menacing salient into the American line and the

Germans could sweep Monneaux and the communication lines of Hill 204 with their fire, so our 9th Infantry and the troops of the 3rd Division in liaison near Monneaux were ordered to capture the town. The refugee inhabitants of the town described, for our benefit, the construction and location of the cellars and the intricacies of its streets. Here, too, is where our night patrol work counted, for we found maps of Vaux and the German trenches on some of our prisoners. Picture postals were carefully studied too, and a plan of attack decided on.

Our attack was ordered for July 1st, and every platoon and squad leader, who was to be in it was given a map of the town with the particular cellar his squad was to capture, designated in red ink. Vaux had sixty-eight cellars and the Huns had made most of them shell-proof.

About 5:30 that afternoon our artillery subjected the town to a terrific bombardment which soon reduced it to ruins. And, by the way, the French didn't like that a little bit—but goodness knows, with all the reconstruction work we were doing over there in the reclaimed area, they ought not to have been peeved about one, little, old, deserted village filled with Huns.

At 6:00 P. M. we went "over the top" on a front of about two kilometers, our 9th Infantry fighting in conjunction with the 23rd Infantry on the left, and the troops of the 3rd Division acting in connection with 10th French Colonial troops.

The 9th Infantry was in the village within fifteen minutes and in twenty-five minutes—we had taken the village and advanced our line about a thousand yards. Some speed, wasn't it?

While we were busy in the town, the 23rd Infantry took the Bois de la Roche, to the northwest of Vaux.

The Yankees captured about sixty machine guns and five hundred prisoners and most of them were Poles from this same Aluminum Division, and I know for a fact that the Germans paid three for one in killed and captured. Our captain ordered us to use the captured machine guns, for Jerry was so keen on getting away that he left us lots of ammunition.

We captured a German motorcycle too, a four wheeled contrivance, the oddest-looking thing I ever saw, for the frame was right in the center of the four wheels—couldn't have tipped over if it wanted to. And say, we captured a Ford "flivver" too. I wonder if there's any place in the world where you couldn't capture one.

Well, we knocked the pep so completely out of the German regiment directly opposing us that it was withdrawn and another put in its place for a counter-attack, which came at day-break of the next day and was some fizzle.

The troops that attacked Vaux were repulsed, their retreat cut off and a hundred and fifty of them taken prisoners. The Germans had seen their last of Vaux and incidently found out what it meant to fight the men from the U. S. A.—they'd had a taste of it that they wouldn't soon forget.

A bunch of our men distinguished themselves in this battle. One Yank in our company brought in two hundred prisoners. A German captain surrendered himself and told where there was a detachment of two hundred men that wished to give themselves up—so this Yank was sent out to get them, and get them he did, and marched them in, in double file with their hands up in the air. They were really a tough looking bunch, and scared—say, their faces were as white as death. They said they hadn't had anything to eat for three days on account of our intense artillery fire, which had completely broken up their lines of communication.

We captured a German lieutenant, too, and when some of our men started to search him he objected strenuously—said he was an officer and refused to be searched. Imagine that line of talk taking with a doughboy.

One of the searchers let loose with a swing that connected squarely with the "Lou's" jaw and he went down for the count, and when he came to, he had forgotten his line of argument and was as timid as a hare. I wonder if they never learn to use their fists in Deutschland.

The Battle of Vaux was the one in which I won my Croix de Guerre. I brought in some "Fritzies" too, and because we were brigaded with the French I received the French Cross, sometime later, from the French General Petain.

It was really funny—the way I happened to capture them. As I said before, Vaux was held by the Huns with about fifty machine guns—and each of our squads had a designated cellar

to take. We made the attack and all went well until I lost my squad, or rather, my squad lost me. I was ready for Jerry tho,' for I had three hundred rounds of ammunition, twelve grenades, and one liquid fire grenade on me.

Well, anyway, I went on, and threw a hand grenade into the first cellar I came to. After the smoke cleared away out came the "Fritzies" with their hands up—and they kept a-coming and a-coming until I thought I'd captured the whole German army.

There were twenty altogether and I called out, gun leveled, you know—"Anyone in this bunch speak English?" and one fellow said, "Sure, I'm from Milwaukee" and I said, "Well, tell your friends to keep their hands up and march and do it d—— quick"—and they marched, believe me, and I took them to camp and that's all I did.

And the funniest thing—the poor geeks were half starved. One of them had a loaf of the worst black bread I ever saw and he held on to it—hands up—until we got to camp. Thought we were beasts and starved our prisoners—wasn't he a fool? And that is how I won my Croix de Guerre.

After getting rid of the Huns, I returned to our line, which was now established on a small hill just on the outskirts of the town, where we prepared for the counter-attack I have already mentioned. When it did come, it was a complete failure for our machine gun fire was so heavy and so accurate that the advancing enemy troops were either mown down or their

retreat cut off so we took several hundred more prisoners.

We held our line for nine days before we were relieved and we had some sport those nine days. I happened to be in a platoon that was detailed to go over to Hill 204 every night to help the French in case the enemy made an early morning attack.

The first night, you know, to the amazement of the French we decided to go over and tease "Fritz" a bit—so we started to crawl toward their trenches on our hands and knees. Bing! All of a sudden a German machine gun opened up on us—hot and heavy, I'm telling you, and then "wowie," an Austrian 88 decided to help do us up. Say! If there's any shell a doughboy hates, it's this one, for tho' it's a small shell, its raises the dickens among the troops.

So there we were, literally between the devil and the deep sea—machine gun fire and that blankety Austrian 88. One of the shells hit near me—so I lay flat for a minute, then made for the hole it had made—and I'm telling you, it doesn't make one only just big enough for a man to curl up in and that's all. Well, three of us had the same idea strike us at the same time, but I sprinted as I used to do in my good old baseball days and landed there first, and snailed myself snugly in while the other two doughboys lay flat on the ground just at the edge of the shell-hole. All of a sudden a shell hit right between them—killing both, and sending me a-kiting about fifteen feet from my bless-

ed shell-hole. I gathered myself up and lit out for a large rock nearby—made it, by George, and considered myself lucky even tho' my arm was bleeding badly where a bit of shrapnel from the shell had hit me.

Directly behind this rock was a badly-wounded doughboy with one of his legs terribly mangled from a shell explosion. We'd all been taught how to use our first aid kit for ourselves, but this poor chap was so shot up and bleeding to death so fast that he could hardly move. So I cut the string off the upper part of his legging, wound it tightly around the upper part of his leg, made a hitch in it and stopped the flow of blood. Gee! I felt sorry for him, but I hunted up the lieutenant and he ordered the boy taken back of the lines to a hospital where he eventually recovered. That was enough for one night.

Our platoon dug holes in the side of Hill 204 so we'd have a place to jump into in case of shell-fire, when we were over there at night—helping the French.

One night when I came over, my hole wasn't there. In place of it there was one about fifteen times as large dug for me by a shell that had landed sometime during the day, directly in the one that I had dug. It was sure lucky for me that I was absent, or I'd have been with the angels or Ingersoll.

This hill, too, was the limit for snipers. We didn't dare put our noses out for fear of them, and even then we lost quite a lot of our men that way. One night we fixed up a bunch of

dummies for the snipers to peg away at—we were tired of losing good men. We fixed our dummies so that we could make them move by pulling a string from a distance back and we sure got “Fritzie’s” goat. They shot all day long at our bait and spared us.

CHAPTER V.

A TRIP TO PARIS

After holding the line nine days, our division had a notification from General Pershing that we were to be given a great surprise as soon as we were relieved. Well, of course, we were jubilant, for we were sure that meant about a ten-day pass to Paris for all of us. Talk about a disappointment! And we had held that blooming line for thirty-nine days, had been shelled all the time and had battled at Vaux, in the Bois de la Roche and on the Hill.

Instead of passes, we were relieved and hiked back to a small village about fifteen miles behind the lines and there we were billeted for a week's rest while our Division was being recruited up to war strength, for we had lost so many men.

That was hard luck, but we had to make the best of it— so we put in our time laying around, fixing up our clothes and playing blackjack. One night I won 2400 francs (\$480.00) and then a most brilliant idea came into my head. I decided to go A. W. O. L. (absent without leave) to Paris and stay as long as the money lasted. Another fellow decided to accompany me, but we got separated after we reached Paris. Say! That's the time I like to remember, and not the battles with their incessant cannonading and the wounded and the dead.

I make no excuses now for my Paris trip, except that thirty-nine days of fighting is a long time, and I was—Oh! so hungry for some fun. So when I struck Paris and found that champagne was only seven francs a bottle, I proceeded to make up for lost time. And the fool things I did, tho' it all seemed quite reasonable then!

After drinking all I could, I left the cafe and started out for a walk. The first thing I saw was a shabby, blind, old begger. So I took him along with me until I found a clothing shop and there, with the aid of a clerk who could speak some English, we fitted him out in brand new clothes and turned him loose, and I don't know to this day how much I paid for them.

Then, all of a sudden, I found six French girls with me—don't know where they came from—and they all seemed so happy. I bought them everything they wanted. We had a gay day until nine o'clock came. Every light in Paris was turned out, as usual, at that time for fear of an air raid, so my party broke up and the M. P.'s (military police) sent me back to the hotel.

The next day, I started out again, still feeling good. While passing an apartment house, I heard music. I went in and on up the stairs until I found the apartment where the piano was and knocked boldly on the door. When the lady opened it, I made motions with my hands as if playing a piano. She nodded vigorously and took me into the parlor where her daughter was playing the piano. We had a musical time—full or empty, I'm always ready for music.

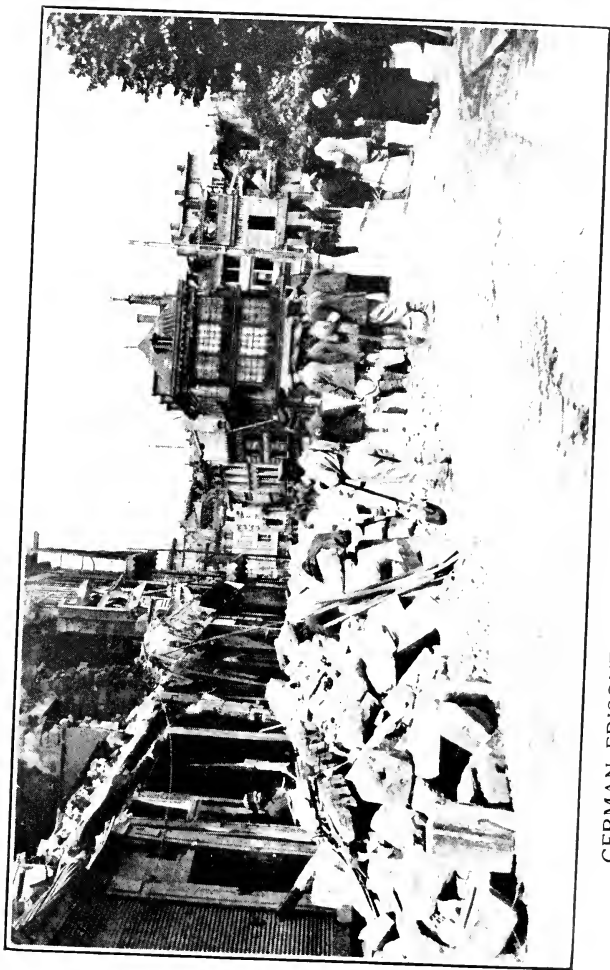
When I left I promised to take dinner with them the next evening. Early the next afternoon I happened to run across a public market and had another brilliant thought. I bought a basket and filled it full of fruits and vegetables and took it to the home of my new friends.

They were perfectly delighted with it and we had a wonderful dinner.

My money lasted just three days—it seemed to vanish like magic, and I couldn't remember where it went—even tho' I didn't spend it like another fellow I knew, did. He imbibed too much champagne for his good sense, bought a little Shetland pony and one of those little wicker carts from a man on the street and drove all over the city to see the sights. He was a sight himself tho' he didn't realize it. When he got tired of driving, he hunted up the man from whom he had bought the cart and sold it back to him for half price.

My problem now was how to get back to my company. You see, not having a pass made it hard for me, and I didn't have any more money. Now on my way to Paris, I had seen a field hospital at Meaux packing up preparatory to moving to some other scene of activity, so I went to the U. S. Headquarters in Paris—told them I belonged to this hospital and it had moved while I was out walking and that I had come down to Paris to find out where it was. They gave me the new location and money enough to go there, which, of course, I used to get back to my own company where I was bulletined for court-martial for going A. W. O. L.

And General Pershing's great surprise came the day I got back, too. It was an order for our Division to proceed at once to the Soissons front where we had the hardest fighting that our division had to contend with during the war.



GERMAN PRISONERS CLEANING THE STREETS OF VERDUN

CHAPTER VI.

BATTLE OF SOISSONS

Our Division was taken by night on July 16th in motor busses to a little village near the western side of the forest of Villers-Cotterets. Here we stopped all day of the 17th to receive extra ammunition and supplies, and not until night came, did we get marching orders thru the forest.

We had orders to attack the Huns on the eastern edge of the forest at 4:45 a. m.—on the morning of the 18th.

Now that blooming forest was about seven miles wide, and intersected everywhere with paths and roads. It was heavy timber, too. Well, our officers didn't seem to know what roads we ought to take and we got scattered all thru that fool wood and mixed up beautifully with the transports, waiting there for the attack. The airplanes couldn't see them in the woods, you know.

And it poured like blazes. The officers worked like mad, trying to find the different companies and battalions and guide them to their positions. Everything was in a terrible mix-up and in the rain and darkness—we had to put on all the speed we could, to get to our jumping-off place in time for the attack.

It seemed impossible that the Division could ever be ready by 4:35 a. m. But we stumbled on in the jet-black darkness, ran when we could, floundered thru the mud—any road we could find, leading in the right direction—and got there—just as morning broke and the artillery laid down a barrage on the enemy's trenches. God! Such a night!

The 5th Marines, 9th and 23rd Infantries went over behind the barrage and we hadn't had a minute to get our breath from our night's experience, but we still had "pep" enough to shoot or bayonet or capture the first Germans that we ran into. They had no idea we were near them, and we must have seemed to them like ghosts coming out of the gray dawn.

That day and the next are just a whirl of fighting in my remembrance—shooting, running, falling into shell holes—sending back captured Huns—and on again—while all around in the little ravines and on the plateaus—thousands of boys in khaki made their last sacrifice.

My company came back with only forty men left and most of them were wounded.

The first part of our drive was across rolling country—our first objective being some farm-houses. We hadn't had time before our advance to have any hand or rifle grenades or machine guns given us, so we only had our rifles—but we reached our first objective fifteen minutes after going over.

The Germans laid down a heavy counter barrage, and our men fell on all sides. At 6:00 a. m. the prisoners began to stream back to the rear and we continued on to our second objective, capturing quite a few field guns.

After the rolling country was passed, we entered another marshy wood and came up to the embankment of the Soissons-Paris railway. We had the 1st Moroccan Division on the left of us and the 38th French Division on the right. The Germans, holding the embankment, fought like fiends, and every advantageous spot had a machine gun on it. The struggle here was terrible, and yet by 9:30 a. m., five hours after the "kick-off," we had advanced nearly five miles, captured the embankment and occupied the plateau overlooking Vierzy beyond. Nearly all our officers were killed, or wounded, but we kept on going.

We took part of the village of Vierzy and a large bunch of prisoners and surrounded the rest of the town. The German army showed the most stubborn resistance.

Our support waves and mopping up troops which came up behind us had hard work digging them out of the town, and the dugouts in the ravines surrounding it.

We lost so many men here that troops from the rear were sent up to fill the gaps. We were beaten down like a field of wheat in a terrific thunder shower.

Just east of Vierzy we ran into an avalanche of shells the enemy were sending over, and it tore our lines all to pieces. The noise of the cannonading is indescribable.

The boys proved themselves heroes in every way and many did some wonderful feats. It seemed just like part of the day's work to us then. We forgot the lack of food or water, forgot the rain and mud, and death itself seemed

just like a release from the terrible carnage. Men, badly wounded, kept on going, oblivious to their condition, until they dropped down. Even then some tried to crawl on, striving to help. It was the Great Reaper, who reaped in the fields of France that day.

We had had no food and very little water, but at 6:30 that evening, the lines of the 2nd Division were closed up, and we continued our advance. By 8:00 o'clock, in the face of intense artillery and machine gun fire, we had gone ahead more than a mile on the plateau, and Vierzy had been captured. The few of us that were left were ordered to dig in for the night, for we had gained nearly six miles, and our whole line of advance was covered with wounded which had to be taken care of.

In the morning the 2nd Engineers (now there was a dandy bunch of men; they dug all night and fought all day) advanced through what was left of our two Infantry regiments and the Marines, and gained more than a mile and a half. We came up then, dug in and *held all our gains*. If we could have gone a half mile farther, we would have reached the Soissons-Chateau-Thierry highway.

However, to go farther was impossible. We had lost nearly half of our men and had had no cooked food for two days and a night. So we were relieved on the night of the 19th by a French Division and rested in the forest until the next day's noon. We were so exhausted that we fell asleep just where we were when the rest order came.

At noon, on the 20th, we marched back to St. Etienne—rested another day—then marched to a village farther back for a rest period and to be recruited up to war strength again, in order to be ready for the Champagne offensive.

After the battle of Soissons, our other campaigns, those of Champagne and Verdun, seemed like child's play. As soon as we had finished them our Division was ordered to Toul, where we trained until we were ordered to take part in the St. Mihiel offensive.

CHAPTER VII.

BATTLE OF ST. MIHIEL

After our terrible loss in the Soissons and preceding battles what was left of us was sent to a small village near Toul to recruit the Division up to war strength and train again. A number of men from Texas were sent in to fill up, and how we did enjoy listening to their Southern accent—laughed at it, too—but say, they were as fine a bunch of soldiers as anyone ever saw, and they knew the art of soldiering from A to Z.

And talk about training, why, our officers trained us as if we'd never been trained before. We made every formation possible and studied all different tactics for attacking the enemy. This last is the most essential thing in modern warfare. We marched over the hills near Toul till we were tough as leather and formations were second nature to us. They taught us how to use the Sho-Sho-Rifle, too—a French gun—made somewhat on the order of a machine gun. It required three men to operate it, and shot eighteen shots in succession, but it was very effective. Before our orders came to leave for a different sector, we staged an attack. It worked perfectly, especially the signal corp work with the aeroplanes while we were ad-

vancing. The Texas troops were especially fine in their new work and we were well prepared to meet the German in any sort of an attack or maneuver that the Germans wished. These Texas boys had strength and brains and wonderful vitality, and "Fritz" would have been worried if he could have seen them. Our fighting power was increasing daily, while that of the Germans was decreasing—so "Fritz" was billed for defeat and I rather think the German people, themselves, were beginning to worry, though the government suppressed all discouraging war news.

Then orders came for our Division to move up to the St. Mihiel Sector. We marched there—a hike I shall never forget. It rained something terrible the whole time and the troops were soaked through and through. We had no dry clothes for a change, and we could not build fires during our rest periods, for the smoke would have given our positions away and "Fritz" would have commenced his favorite pastime—that of shelling the woods where our troops were stationed. So we let our clothes dry on our backs rather than have "Fritz's" pellets to take with our meals.

And if you've never seen French mud, you've never seen real mud. Get a layer started on your feet, and it just keeps "taking unto itself more mud" until one has a width and thickness of five or six inches of it. It takes strength to lift shoes coated like that, on a long hike, with the rain pouring down—but we certainly agreed with one doughboy poet who wrote:

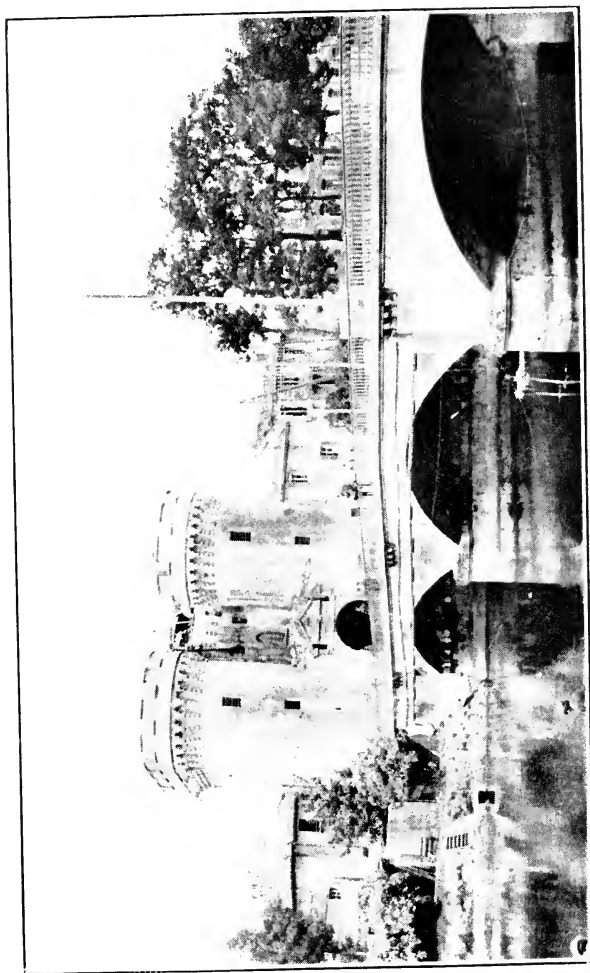
*"We have heard of Texas gumbo,
And the mud in the Philippines,
Where, if we had legs like Jumbo,
The mud would cover our jeans,
But never did we get a chance
To feel real mud till we hit France.*

*"Our shoes are deep in it,
We often sleep in it,
We almost weep in it—
It's everywhere;
We have to fight in it,
And vent our spite in it,
We look a sight in it,
But we don't care."*

We were boys—a long ways from home—and we wanted to "beat up" the Germans as soon as possible and get back home, and we intended to do it, mud or no mud, rain or no rain. From somewhere, I never could quite figure it out, our troops seemed to get a supply of inward strength and purpose that carried us through a lot of hardships.

When we reached our position in the woods, we pitched our "pup tents" and crawled into them, wet as could be, and slept better than we ever had on a feather-bed at home, the sleep of healthy exhaustion.

Next day our outfits were completed and by night we were ready for the big drive, and as soon as it was dark we started out for the old trenches on the Alsace-Lorraine front. Talk about rain! It came down in torrents that night.



GATES OF VERDUN



We thought we were soaked the night before—but we must have been dreaming. It wasn't a patching to this soaking. The old communication trenches that we went through were something awful—the mud was from six inches to a foot deep. Sometimes I wonder if things don't always seem worse out in the pitch-black darkness.

We reached the front line trenches about midnight, ready for our attack at dawn.

At one o'clock a. m., September 12th, it was, our artillery opened up on "Fritz" and his gang, the most terrific shell-fire the world had ever known. All the thunder storms that ever happened on this old globe put together wouldn't begin to measure up to the noise that the great American artillery made that morning. That front billed as a quiet sector, too. We couldn't hear ourselves think on our side, and no living thing could last long on the other. The bombardment lasted about four hours and it is claimed that more shells were fired in this battle than in any previous one that the Allied Powers were in. It sounded to me like the end of the world. One of the boys cupped his hands and yelled full strength into my ear: "Say, boy, some Fourth of July we're having!" His voice sounded like a whisper to me. What he said was the truth, believe me.

At dawn, the barrage lifted, and we went "over the top." We could breathe better in the stillness and were eager to be off. "Fritz" had worked for four years laying his acres of barbed wire entanglements, but our artillery

tore them all to pieces. The mass of wire bothered us a little though, for it tore through our leggings and cut our legs. After we had gone a short ways, at least a third of the boys had no leggings left. In front of us were some deep woods, but we figured that if we could get through those safely, out into the open stretch of field beyond, we'd have plain sailing for a while. But after all, we had very little trouble taking the woods. Once in a while a machine gun—stationed on a platform up in a tree, would take its toll and hold us up—but not for very long. We advanced so fast through the woods that the Germans were completely bewildered. Very few of them stayed to welcome us, and those that did had their hands high in the air and had complexions like ghosts. Simply scared to death, they were. After going through the woods we made a sharp turn to the right and came out into a large open field. Intense machine gun fire held us up for about half an hour, but some of our men performed their already famous flanking stunt and put the guns out of commission. We skirmished across the field and then met the Germans coming toward us in all directions. Were we frightened? I guess not. They all had their hands in the air. That bombardment had taken all the pep out of them.

Our troops had no time to bother with them—just motioned to them to keep on going toward the road—for the troops behind us would take care of them.

Then again, we went through another bunch of woods which the Germans held as long as

they could. It wasn't much of a battle. We captured about a thousand Germans there, including a full German band. When we got out of these woods, we could see the Germans on the opposite hill retreating as fast as possible—even the artillery had left their positions.

So we rested a bit—opened our “canned Willie” and devoured it with relish. It was rotten stuff, but it tasted good then.

Some distance away, I saw a team standing in the road and decided to do some investigation of my own. Well, it was full of some farmer's household goods that he had been trying to save, but one of the horses had been killed by a rifle bullet; that was as far as he could go. At any rate, the driver had disappeared—probably some German—so we ransacked the wagon. It was full of rare old brandy, razors, etc. We used the brandy to wash down the “canned Willie,” and away we went. Say, we had a lot of “pep.” Down we went into a sort of canyon or naturally protected valley and discovered that it had been the German officers' quarters. That was a place to rest in—and we certainly availed ourselves of the opportunity. We prowled around a while and collected souvenirs and then made our greatest discovery—a *real* kitchen hanging full of quarters of *real* beef. How our mouths did water. I started the range going and we had a meal fit for a king. The Germans had left in such a hurry that they weren't able to take anything with them. That made it fine for us. For after we'd discovered the kitchen, we discovered a canteen, and believe me or not, a

keg of beer on tap. Now, of course, we had been given orders not to touch or taste anything that the Germans left in their retreat—but we had almost reached our objective, which was Jaulny, and nothing had happened to me yet, so I decided to try the beer—orders or no orders. I picked out the biggest stein hanging on the wall, filled it up at the tap and said to the boys: “Here goes, poison or no poison,” and down my throat the German brew trickled.

The boys stared at me, waiting to see me “kick off,” but I felt fine, so tried another stein-full. Thought I’d die then, but no such luck. Well, when I didn’t croak, the boys made a dive for the rest of the steins on the wall and made quick work of that keg.

We had about three more kilometers to go before we reached Jaulny, which was our objective. Part of the 9th Infantry was detailed to go with the 23rd Infantry to capture the town of Thiacourt, which was the German supply base of the Alsace-Lorraine sector.

The 9th Infantry took the town of Jaulny in a very short time. After the Germans had been driven out, the women, who had been in the town during the four years of German occupation, came out from the cellars with outstretched arms to greet us. They hugged and kissed us and told us through French interpreters how terribly they had suffered under German tyranny and how all the men had been forced to fight for Germany. They were all ordered by our officers to stay in one large cellar for protection during shell-fire. The next evening they

were taken to the rear. They were just like children—they were so happy they couldn't express it. After four years of privation, their deliverance seemed too good to be true.

There were a lot of old women in the town of Thiacourt, too, when that was taken. They could not seem to realize that they were free.

The capture of Thiacourt cut the Germans off from their base of supplies and it was a feather, too, in our caps. For we captured over a million dollars' worth of supplies. There was everything imaginable in that town that an army could use. The Germans had evacuated the town so hastily that they even left large guns mounted on flat cars in the railroad yard. After Thiacourt and Jaulny (our objectives) were taken, we began to give ourselves a "looking over." Our bunch of soldiers looked more like tramps than a Division of Uncle Sam's fighting forces. Our clothing was torn and caked with mud from head to foot and our guns were all rusty. My gun was never clean after that fight. Try as I would, I never could get the rust off, but even an old, rusty gun comes in handy sometimes. Our rusty guns not only defeated "Fritz," but they sure made us work hard to get them ready for inspection, for gun inspection by the officers was very strict, and if our guns didn't suit, we not only had to do extra detail work, but got a good "bawling out" by the officer, and who in the devil wants to be "bawled out" in front of his soldier pals for having a dirty gun? Not I.

Our biggest problem, after we had rested awhile, was how to change our wet clothes, and

what to do with ourselves while they were drying out. We managed it beautifully, however, for we found a German quartermaster's department and arrayed ourselves in new German uniforms and boots while our uniforms dried out. We were in Jaulny for three days when we were ordered back for a rest. Needed it, too, we did. The French officers said that we could not possibly take our objectives in less than three days, but it only took us nine hours to do the job. The divisions in this drive that helped to make history were the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 26th, 37th and 42nd. Their remarkable achievements will never be duplicated.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOSPITAL LIFE

After this battle I went to the hospital, but before telling the how and why of this—I want to tell something about the men, wounded on a battlefield.

When troops go into battle they are usually so keyed up that a wound comes as a climax and relieves the tension. I have seen men, instantly killed by a bullet, retain exactly the crouching, sitting, or kneeling position they had when hit. Their muscles and nerves were so tense at the time that even death did not relieve the strain. The bodies would fall over at a touch—still retaining the same position.

In most cases, when a man is wounded, he does not feel acute pain for some time after. He has usually, nothing to say when he is on the stretcher going to the dressing station—for the nerve centers, deadened by the wound have not yet recovered sensitiveness. But by the time the wounded men have reached the evacuation or base hospitals, the nerves are normal again, and the pain begins. It is amazing tho', to the uninitiated, to see men horribly wounded not even moaning—and wounds at the front were horrible, for a fragment of shell always carries away what it hits. Some of the men appeared rather interested in their wounds, some paid no

attention to them, while others were horrified and wanted to die. I remember one fellow who attempted to shoot himself, but the piece of shell that crippled him had broken his revolver, too. Boys with shattered legs begged their comrades to shoot them. I shall always remember how they pleaded. We passed one such in an advance one morning and retired that night by a different route. When we went by the same place the next morning we found this same soldier dead with a bullet in his head; but we never knew whether he did it himself or whether some German patrol shot him in the night. I wonder, sometimes, if the choice of the decision should not be left to the wounded man—but of course that was impossible.

There was little time on the battlefield for last messages and very few were given in the hospitals for our boys always felt as if they were going to get well. Last messages were either given or written before the advances in the gray morning hours. We had time then and usually some writing paper.

Wounded men have little to say, though; in every battle we heard calls for help, both when we went into and when we returned from an attack—yet, the calls were few in comparison with the number wounded.

In most cases, where a man was killed or wounded, his belongings, such as wrist watch, ring, and knife were collected if possible and mailed to his nearest relative. In some of the battles tho'—where we only thought of food and water, shells and sleep, peril—and victory—where we had only one dominant thought—to

beat the Boche—we had no time to think that a mother might care for a dead son's watch and if we had, there was no paper for his comrades to wrap it in nor any to mail it. It all had to be done officially and there was so little time.

I was sent back to the hospital at Toul in October, 1918, sick with the famous "flu." I was kept there two days, transferred to a hospital train and taken clear across France to the Beau Desert Hospital, a few miles from Bordeaux. There the "flu" developed into pneumonia and then empyema (pus abscesses between the lung and chest walls) and I lay there for five months between life and death.

This hospital was built of cement and had very little heat in it and sometimes the cold was intense. It was hard to be sick and cold too—but we made the best of it, and say, we had the best bunch of nurses. They did everything in their power to make us well and happy—they always had a new joke for us to laugh at. Laughing helped like thunder; it was so easy to be blue in France every time you thought how wide the ocean was.

One of our nurses was such a dear. Every morning when she reported for duty—she always greeted us with a "How are you, my dear children," and somehow, I always felt better—she was so like a mother to us.

The overseas Red Cross Nurses underwent a great many hardships too. The field hospitals were near the front, and sometimes under fire. Many times I have seen German planes bombing

our field hospitals—without any excuse for the outrage, for large Red Crosses were painted on the roofs of the hospitals, plainly visible from an aeroplane.

Sometimes, too, the nurses had to live on the same kind of grub that we did—just plain “canned Willie” and hardtack, but they never grumbled. They deserve a special niche in history.

The Salvation Army, the Red Cross and the Knights of Columbus were so good to us at the front and in the hospital. While we were lying in bed, death staring us in the face, they did far more than we ever expected them to. They brought us practically everything we asked for. Uncle Sam’s boys will always have a warm spot in their hearts for these institutions and no one who ever donated anything to these organizations need regret it.

CHAPTER IX.

HOME AGAIN

After five months of terrible suffering at Beau Desert Hospital I had the choice of staying there until well or coming home. I couldn't see that there was any choice—home was dearer to me than heaven—so I took the chance. If I didn't last thru—at least I'd be buried in my own country.

We were loaded onto a hospital ship—at least, the officers called it that. It was an old English boat called the "Henderson" and she was supposed to make the voyage in ten to twelve days. We went by the southern route, by the Azores, hoping to avoid the storms, but we ran into one after another—each worse than the last until I thought the ship would turn turtle. The drainage tube in the abscess in my side was so long that every roll of the ship drove it farther into my side and the nineteen days that it took to cross the ocean seemed like nineteen years.

I was sent for eleven days to the Debarkation Hospital in New York. The people of New York gave us royal treatment, took us out for long automobile rides, to the theatres, etc., and did everything they could for us. They made France and its horrors seem far away.

On March 1st, 1919, I was sent to the Base Hospital at Camp Lewis, Washington. All along the route, the Red Cross Chapters of each town and city met us, and nearly killed us, giving us so much to eat, and so much to smoke. I never had any idea that there were so many kind women in the world.

At Camp Lewis, I stayed in the empyema ward until my discharge on the 29th of June, 1919. In my estimation, the hospital at this camp had the finest staff of officers in the army. I had begun to think I would never get well—but my recovery under their care was fairly rapid and thanks to them, I am well today—perhaps, not as well as before my enlistment, but as a doughboy once said, “As long as we’re alive, we should worry.”

Camp Lewis Hospital had a great many visitors then, who brought us flowers, candies, cakes, and everything. Some came out of curiosity to hear the stories from overseas—but sick men don’t like to talk—and some came to cheer us up.

There was one woman who will remain in my memory forever. She rarely missed a day in coming to our ward, and she always came with a smile—one that seemed to say, “You’re all going to get well.” She nursed us all in her happy, motherly way, and made us all well. She was Mrs. Hiram Tuttle of Tacoma, Washington, and she was known as the Mother of Ward 81 at the Base Hospital. The boys of 81 will never forget her.

I was in France fifteen months—ten months on the firing line with the shock troops, and

five months in the hospital. I spent nine months in the hospital. Altogether I was in the army two years and three months, and I'd willingly do it again, if our Country needed me.

CHAPTER X.

RECORD OF 2ND DIVISION

Next to having won the Croix de Guerre, I am proud of having belonged to the 2nd Division. In the records of the Intelligence Department of the German general staff, the Second Division was rated as the highest of the American Divisions, but the men of our Division will tell you that that's a mistake, that the first Division was just as good. Our own records show that the 2nd Division captured about one-fourth of the entire number of prisoners captured by the American Expeditionary Forces; one-fourth of the total number of guns captured, and suffered about one-tenth of the total number of casualties.

We served in the Verdun sector, the Chateau Thierry and the St. Mihiel Sectors, the Champagne and the Meuse-Argonne offensives.

Our Division captured 288 officers and 11,026 men, 343 guns and 1356 machine guns.

Our total advance was about forty miles, against thirty-nine different German divisions, and our casualties were 24,429 men.

Then too, we are proud, because our Division has been decorated more than any other. Our historian has a whole sheaf of citations and congratulatory telegrams from President, Kings, Field Marshals and Generals .

The Division is composed of the 9th and 23rd Infantries, the 5th and 6th Marines, the 2nd Engineers and the 12th, 15th, and 17th Artillery Regiments.

No school history will be complete that does not record the splendid achievements of the 2nd Division.

THE END

